

from a tribe they called Manslé, said to be living in the neighbourhood of Rio Paraguay.¹ Thus the spangles of which the Tapiete were in possession had, by way of trade between the tribes, been transported at least 360 miles from the place where they had been made.

Among the Choroti, the long spangle necklaces (as seen in fig. 56) served them as a kind of currency. So, for instance, the value of an Indian woollen mantle was expressed in a certain number of arm-lengths of such a necklace, and that of a head of cattle in some other, definite, number of arm-lengths. In gambling, the stake often consisted of snail-shell spangles or whole necklaces. [525]

There were also other objects which formed articles of trade between the Indians. On page 81 I have mentioned a wooden comb which probably originates from the Chiriguano, and on page 78 I have reproduced a small wooden bowl containing colouring seeds that have probably come from the same tribe. The child's poncho, fig. 35, has probably been bought by some Choroti from an Ashluslay; it is also possible that a few other objects in my collection have found their way to the Choroti Indians through barter with neighbouring tribes.

¹ Nordenskiöld (13), p. 127.

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I. Rosen E-5 (1901-1902) 1924 SK6 Choroti SK6

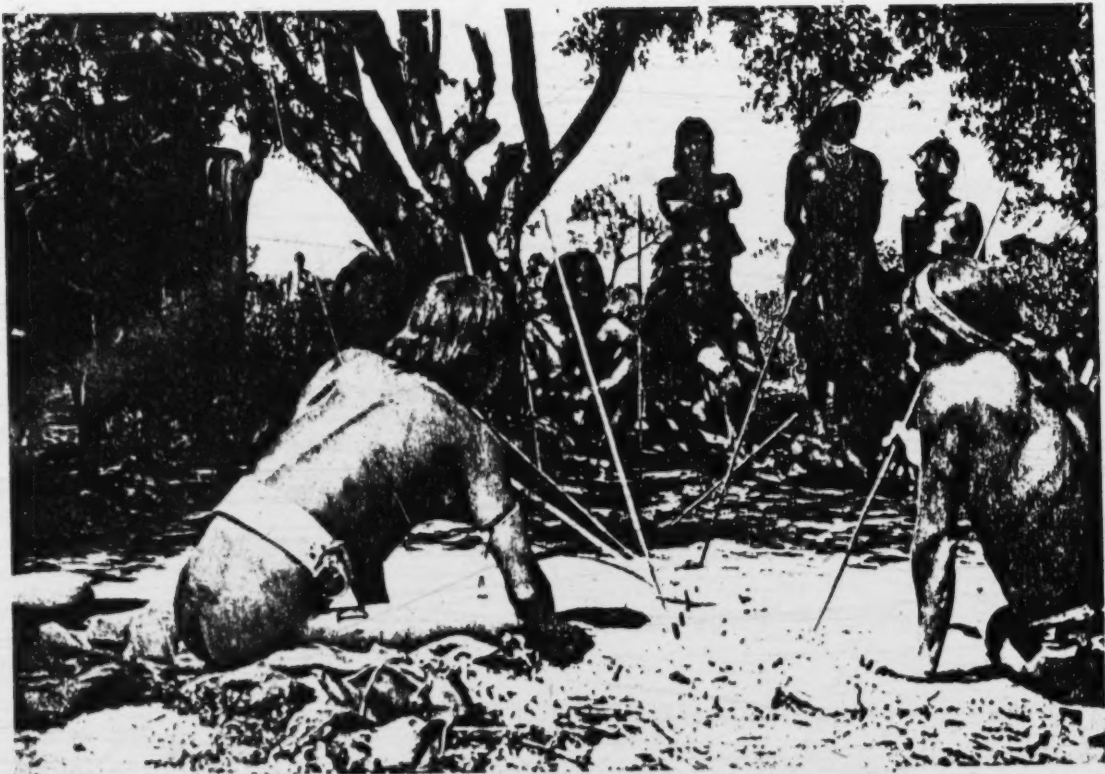


Fig. 171. Men who are engaged in playing a gambling game called "chukes". The scoring is done by means of arrows stuck into small holes in the ground, usually arranged in the way seen in fig. 173. On account of the shadow thrown by the arrow nearest the foreground, the holes next to this arrow, although strongly sunlit, can be seen. The third arrow from the foreground is planted in the "rivers" (see page 173). From this picture, as from the diagram, fig. 173, will be seen that the row of holes at times may be laid out so as to form a curve or an obtuse angle.

Choroti, Gran Chaco, Bolivia. Photo. E. v. R.

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The Choroti takes much pleasure in games and pastimes. Fig. 171⁵²⁵ shows some Choroti men engaged upon a gambling game called 'chuke', which in the Chaco is widely known and very popular. It is a kind of dicing game, although the dice, unlike ours, are not cubes but consist of planoconvex or concavo-convex sticks of wood or cane, usually about a decimetre long. Four playing sticks are always used. The convex side of the playing sticks is generally ornamented by burning or carving, so that it may quickly be decided, after each throw, which side has come uppermost (fig. 172). When the Choroti are preparing to play chuke, they dig little holes in the ground, in the way shown in figs. 171 and 173.¹ The men playing at a game of chuke may number two, four, six, or eight. I have never seen women playing chuke. If we suppose that only two persons are playing this game, this is the way it is done:



Fig. 172. Counters, of yellow wood, planoconvex, with ornament burned in. Used in the game of chuke, Choroti, Gran Chaco, Bolivia. * J. Riksm., 10. 3. 79.

The holes numbered 1 and 23, respectively, are the 'homes' of the players. A plants one of his arrows in No. 1, and B one of his in No. 23. These arrows (pointed sticks will also do) represent the two players. The hole numbered 12 is called the 'lake' or the 'river'; it constitutes the boundary between the fields of the two players. Into the holes numbered 1 to 11, A places his 'chips', or counters, consisting of bits of grass, wooden sticks, chips of wood, or seeds, and B puts his into the holes numbered 13 to 23. These counters are called 'sheep'. A takes two playing sticks (see fig. 172) in either hand, and throws them against each other so that they may touch when they are falling to the ground. The players then look to see how many sticks have fallen with the convex side up, and the value of the throw is calculated in accordance with the following scoring system:

¹ A somewhat different system as to the number and arrangement of the chuke holes is also in use. Nordenskiöld (11), p. 163-164.

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4 convex sides upturned count 4 points,

0 2 .

2 1 .

A throw resulting in odd numbers of convex sides turning up is valueless, i. e., counts 0 points.

Supposing A makes a 4-point throw, this entitles him to move his arrow to the fourth hole from his 'home', that is to say, to No. 5. If he had made an 0 score, his adversary would then be in turn for throwing the sticks, but as it is, A is by the rules allowed to go on and then makes, say, 2 points (i. e., no convex side up) and accordingly moves his arrow another two holes, to No. 7. If his next throw results in nil, then he must not move his arrow. It is now his adversary's turn, and



Fig. 173. Arrangement of holes in the ground, for the game of 'chuke'. From Karsten (5), fig. 5.

if he makes 1 point with his throw, he moves his arrow from his 'home', which is No. 23, to No. 22 hole. If his next throw counts 4 points, he moves his arrow 4 holes, to No. 18. A zero throw breaks the sequence, and changes the turns for A and B to throw. Eventually, when either player makes a throw which carries him across the 'river' (No. 12 hole) so that his arrow has to be placed in a hole within his opponent's field, he takes the 'sheep' that are in that hole. Should a player make a throw which lands him in the 'river', he scores a no throw, and is not allowed to play again until his opponent has completed an entire round. If the player who is in the 'river' should from that position make a zero throw, then he has to move his arrow back to the hole nearest his 'home' where he still has some 'sheep' left. And if, for instance, A should knock B's arrow out (see below) before he has taken all his 'sheep', then B has to move his arrow back to his 'home'.

After a player has reached the end of the row of holes, he starts back towards his own 'home', and moves his arrow according to his throws, as before. In this way the arrows wander forward and back

again until a player has taken all his adversary's 'sheep', when it remains for him to try and takes his arrow too. In this he succeeds if he can make a throw which lands him in the hole where his opponent's arrow happens to be. If he does that after having taken all his opponent's 'sheep', then he has won the game.¹ 525

The Choroti are enthusiastic chuke players, and as a rule play for stakes. On this game they can stake snail shell necklaces, woollen mantles and other things, often representing considerable values to the Indians. According to Karsten, the chuke game may also be played for purposes of magic. It is mostly played when there is a dearth of food, for the Indians believe that they are able to make the wild fruit grow in larger quantities by assiduously playing chuke.² [789]

Playing with a ball is a much favoured pastime. A ball game resembling hockey is played among the Choroti and several other Chaco tribes. The players divide themselves into two teams, each having its goal to defend. The distance between the goals depends on whether grown-ups or children are going to play, the distance being greater in the case of the former. Each goal is marked by branches stuck into the ground. A wooden ball is thrown into the centre between the goals by an Indian who is not taking part in the match. By means of 'hockey' sticks consisting of the leafstalks of a palm, grown with a natural bend (fig. 174), or of tree branches, the players then try to drive the ball so that it rolls into the goal that their opponents are defending (fig. 177). As will be seen, this game is played on the same principle as our hockey, by attacking and defending. It was a great pleasure to watch Choroti boys playing hockey, in which their native lissomness was exhibited. 526

I also saw Choroti children play at ball. Their hand-balls consisted of dry maize leaves tied together in the way seen in fig. 175. They have the appearance of old-time flaming hand grenades, and, whichever way they are thrown, they always fly 'ball' foremost and the 'fiery tail' pointing backwards or upwards.

The Choroti boys make themselves both long bows and pellet-bows with which they shoot at a mark, or use in play in other ways; they also amuse themselves with a kind of light, two-cord bolas³ and with little

¹ Cf. Nordenskiöld (11), pp. 163-164, and Karsten (8), pp. 100-102.

² Karsten (8), p. 102.

³ Nordenskiöld (13), fig. 24.

number 3. He repeats his throw and throws for instance, 1 (*shuke*). Then he puts his arrow into number 4, and so forth. A continues until he throws 0, whereupon B begins and continues until he throws 0. B then starts from his «house» number 23, proceeding backwards. If a player passes the «river» (12) and enters a hole occupied by his opponent, he is entitled to throw out his opponent's «sheep». The object of the game is at first to throw out all the «sheep» of the opponent, the player passing from one end of the series of grooves to the other and back again. If a player succeeds in placing his marker (arrow) in a groove where his opponent happens to have his own marker, the latter is «killed» (thrown out) and has to start again from the beginning. Every player tries to throw out all the «sheep» of his opponent and at last his marker also. If he succeeds in doing so he has won. If someone during the game arrives at the «river» (*tauk*), he is «drowned», and if by the following throw he does not succeed in getting out, (that is, if he throws 0), he is obliged to go back to that groove situated nearest to his «house» where he has still a «sheep».

Gambling is always connected with the *shuke* game, and the stakes lost — whether it be a collar, a shirt, a pair of trousers or some other valuable object — are always scrupulously paid as real debts of honour. This is no doubt in part due to the fact, that the *shuke* game is not a hazard game in the ordinary sense of the word, but has a ceremonial significance. If the debts were not scrupulously paid, the game would fail to produce the effect which the Indians expect of it, namely, the increase of the edible fruits of the forest.

What struck me particularly with regard to the *shuke* game was the fact that, at any rate among the Choroti Indians, it is only played at a certain time of the year, more strictly speaking, in the month of March, when the rainy season on the Chaco ends and the dry season or «winter» begins. Then everyone began upon it at once. In all villages *shuke*-dice were carved and the game went on every day for many hours, sometimes from early morning till late in the evening. This very fact seemed to me to indicate that certain mysterious ideas were connected with the game. Besides, the game was played in a strikingly intensive, almost nervous tempo and the results of every cast — *tauva*, *shuke*, *kima* — were always shouted out in a very loud voice, which could be heard far away.

The Chorotis expressly declared to me that the *shuke* game is played only at the beginning of the «winter», when the algaroba (*Prosopis alba*) and other edible fruits of the forest grow scarce. At that time a period begins for the Chaco Indians when they usually have to struggle very

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